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Learning Activity #1: Pronoun Concept Map

**Activity Description**

This activity will involve students creating a pronoun concept map using Inspiration software. Students will work as individuals to produce their own product. My classroom has both student desks and student computers, so the students will conduct some planning and organizing at their desks before they move to their desktop computers. Students will come into my classroom already familiar with Inspiration software since they are all required to take a computer elective course. The teacher in this course uses Inspiration software, so I will only need to conduct a brief review of the basic tools in the software. After I describe the activity in class for the students, I will give them the remaining class time to “play” with the software and become confident changing text, font, icons, organizing levels, and creating connecting lines as needed before having them start their actual product.

**Learning Objectives**

My 6th grade English students will participate in this activity. They will practice and demonstrate the following skills and knowledge:

* Explain how the various types of correct pronoun use enhance our writing.
* Display relationships and connections between pronouns and their categories.
* Identify pronouns and their antecedents while recognizing proper pronoun-agreement.
* Correctly use pronouns in a variety of original sentences.
* Identify and define key terms.
* Paraphrase definitions.

**Technology Integration**

Compared to a traditional pen/paper test, this technology activity will indeed improve students’ learning process. Students will not only have to know their basic grammar content, but the Inspiration software allows students to make connections and relationship among the various topics we have been discussing in class, thus exploring some higher order thinking skills. This project is designed to have students make personal decisions and organization methods to display their knowledge and skills. Also, this software and computer use allows students to produce an actual product, something that is original and creative rather than conforming them to specific answers or responses on a traditional test. My hope is that as students engage in their work, I am available to assist in troubleshooting and providing prompt feedback while they work compared to waiting to see a final product. I could see myself in more of a facilitator role compared to a presenter of knowledge when this specific technology is involved.

**Connection to Standards**

Common Core State Standards: Language Arts 6th Grade

* Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
* Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, and possessive).
* Use intensive pronouns (e.g., *myself, ourselves*).
* Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.
* Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).
* Recognize variations from Standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.
* Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
* Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
* Write routinely over extended time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

NETS for Students

* Creativity and Innovation: Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology.
  + Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.
  + Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.
* Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making: Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources.
  + Identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation.
  + Plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project.
* Technology Operations and Concepts: Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations.
  + Understand and use technology systems.
  + Select and use applications effectively and productively.
  + Transfer current knowledge to learning of new technologies.

**Students’ Prior Knowledge**

This product will be used as the pronoun unit assessment. Prior to this assessment, students will have participated in note taking, guided practice, individual practice, and a midpoint quiz before engaging in this final assessment. I want students to brainstorm some of their ideas on paper before allowing them to work on their concept map. I find that during this time, students are more comfortable and conscious of asking questions. This is an important instructional feature to make sure students are clear on the expectations of this project, especially since an assessment activity like this is new territory for them. This time also ensures me knowing they are prepared to work on this activity.

**Content Knowledge**

I feel I have a pretty good grasp on the content that I am teaching. I’ve taught the content in the past, so I feel most, if not all, of my kinks are worked out. I found my past students sometimes struggle with the variety of pronouns offered in the chapter, so I have a few different resources I am able to use during my daily lessons to provide student with ample examples of pronouns and their connections to writing. I, myself, must know the various categories of pronouns (subject, object, possessive, and reflexive, intensive, indefinite) and their cases (person, number, case) in relationship to their antecedents.

**Pedagogical Knowledge**

I know that I will have to take the time to present the content to my students. For many of them, this is the first time they are encounter such specific pronoun information. While teaching, I use graphic organizers to help keep the students focused and on track with the information they are using or finding in the sample sentences. My daily lessons include a bit of note taking on key terms and/or definitions. Guided practice (analyzing practice sentence, revising/editing paragraphs) plays a major role in lessons, and every student is involved in participating before independent practice is given. A chapter check-in quiz is given to see how the students are making progress while monitoring smaller steps or portions of the chapter. Many days and hours of practice will be needed in order for my students to be successful on the final evaluation using technology. As previously shared, I plan on having students brainstorm at their desks before moving to their computer stations. Helping students set up a plan and organize their thoughts will better help them understand the expectations of this activity more clearly. During this time, I know many questions will arise, and it is my role to help guide student to making connections and relationships of pronouns evident in their final product. I do have to be mindful of a few students with special needs. I have a few who are placed in the 6th grade, but are not functioning at such a level. I would consider reducing their workload as necessary, as not to overwhelm them with information that is not appropriate for their cognitive abilities.

**Technology Knowledge**

I am pretty familiar with using Inspiration for creating basic webs and feel comfortable and confident that this type of technology is suitable for my students, their needs, and curricular expectations. I am able to help troubleshoot as needed in regards to text features, icons, organization levels, and connecting lines. I only expect these basic features to be used by my students, although if they find an additional feature they would like to add, they are welcome to do so and teach me in the process! I will conduct this activity during school hours, so I am mindful that students might not have this specific type of software available at home. There are times when a few students might need an extra few minutes to finalize details or make up absent classes. Parents are usually very flexible as long as dates/times are scheduled in advance. I will give the students as much time as they need to complete and feel confident with this project, so timing is always an interesting factor to consider when using technology in school. If the computers choose not to work properly on any given day, we might have to take a break, conduct an enrichment lesson, and continue working on the project the next day. I feel all my students will be able to use Inspiration, including those with special needs. Students will upload their final products to our school’s online grading system so that I can evaluate them. I would like to be able to print them in color, so I will have contact our tech support to have access to their color printer. Using the color printer does not always go as planned, so I will take the responsibility of printing when the printer is available, rather than having students try to use it, and it not work during class time.

**TPACK Analysis**

Students are essential given a blank slate and asked to make specific decisions to present their knowledge through the use of an original, creative product. By doing so, their higher order thinking skills are in full effect working with content. The interaction of content, pedagogy, and technology is present and fully enhances the learning process, as well as my assessment of students’ work. I truly feel that my past attempts of using traditional testing methods cannot even compare to the level of skill and knowledge students will demonstrate in this specific activity. Through this learning activity, I have “confronted a basic educational issue and reconstructed” the three areas TPCK encourages me to think about (Handbook of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Educators, 2008). This activity will also foster an enjoyable way of learning the content compared to my past traditional attempts. This activity does not just teach a basic skill or piece of information. Rather, through the use of technology, students will develop connections and relationships that demonstrate their thorough knowledge of the content.

**Assessment Plan**

I will use the following rubric to assess the students. The rubric categories are based on our school’s use of the 6+1 Writing Traits, and the students are very much accustomed to the format and terms on the rubric. My goal for all students is to be in the 3-4 range on the rubric. For those students who do not meet this goal, I might consider allowing them revisions until they are able to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the subject matter.

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| **6th Pronoun Concept Map** | **4: Excelling** | **3: Achieving** | **2: Developing** | **1: Emerging** |
| **Ideas and Content** | 🞄11-12 key vocabulary terms are correctly expressed  🞄 “Why pronouns matter in writing” is clearly explained in a variety of ways. | 🞄9-10 key vocabulary terms are correctly expressed  🞄 “Why pronouns matter in writing” is adequately addressed; minor explanation is still needed for clarity. | 🞄7-8 key vocabulary terms are correctly expressed  🞄More explanation is needed about “why pronouns matter in writing.” | 🞄Less than 8 key terms are expressed  “Why pronouns matter in writing” is not addressed. |
| **Organization** | 🞄Key terms and sentences are organized into appropriate groups.  🞄Connecting lines show clear relationships between ideas. | 🞄Key terms and sentences are organized into appropriate groups.  🞄Some connecting lines are unclear | 🞄Grouping of key terms, sentences, and connecting lines are confusing or unclear. | 🞄There is no relationship between key terms and sentences. |
| **Sentences** | 🞄Sample sentences are provided and complete. | | 🞄Sample sentences are missing and/or are presented as fragments or run-ons. | |
| **Word Choice** | 🞄All work is paraphrased. | 🞄Most work is paraphrased. | 🞄Many text examples are copied. | 🞄Little or none of the work is paraphrased. |
| **Conventions** | 🞄Few or no errors in grammar or spelling. | 🞄Few minor errors in grammar or spelling. | 🞄Many errors in grammar or spelling. | 🞄Numerous errors in grammar or spelling. |
| **Presentation** | 🞄Icons and font features are personalized. | | | |